

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the

F U N E R A L

Of the Reverend

Edward Reynolds, D. D.

Arch-Deacon of *Norfolk*,

And Rector of *Kings-Thorp*, near *Northampton*.

By *WILLIAM GIBBS*, M. A.

Rector of *Gayton* in *Northampton-shire*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *John Astwood*, for *Thomas Cockeril* in
Amen-Corner, and *Herbert Wallwyn* in the *Poultry*,
over against the *Stocks-Market*. 1699.

STERMON

FUNERAL

Edward Reynolds, D.D.

And Bishop of Norfolk

And Rector of St. Andrew's, near London

By WILLIAM LUTHER, M.A.

Rector of St. Andrew's, near London



C

Printed by John Alcock for Thomas Cadogan
at the Press of the University of Cambridge
in the year 1700

T O

M^{rs}. Frances Reynolds,

Relict of Dr. R E Y N O L D S.

M A D A M,

WHen your Desires were once and again signified to me, of having this Discourse published, it became not me to Dispute them, especially in such a Season, and in such Circumstances to which nothing is to be denied, and therefore I presently resolv'd to Comply, tho' I was not Ignorant at the same time how hazardous a Proof I must give of my Obedience.

For tho' Sermons of this kind are not so liable to Censure as others, because if they be plain and practical, 'tis all that is expected from them, and Allowances are generally made for those Deficiencies of Language, Method and Reading, which would hardly

28310 111 A 2 be

The Epistle Dedicatory.

be granted in other Composures: Yet if there be any thing of a Character added, That is capable of being assaulted by so many, and in such various wayes, according to the different Apprehensions and Interests of Men, that nothing renders an Author more obnoxious, or sooner forfeits the Reputation of the whole.

What Entertainment, MADAM, this is likely to meet with, I am not at all solicitous to know; for if what is here said be any wayes instrumental to Moderate that Sorrow you have justly Conceiv'd, for the Loss of so near a Relation; or may serve to keep up the Memory of so worthy an Example, I have all my aim; unless it be the gratifying of a little Ambition which this Opportunity gives me, in letting the World know, that I was once honoured with the Friendship of the Deceased, and that I am

M A D A M,

Your most Obliged and Humble Servant,

WILL. GIBBS.

I THESS. IV. 13.

*But I would not have you to be Ignorant,
Brethren, concerning them which are asleep,
that ye sorrow not even as others which
have no Hope.*

THese Words are an Introduction to a short Discourse which St. Paul makes concerning the Certainty of a Resurrection, and the manner thereof, by which he Endeavours to rectifie the Mistakes of some concerning a Future State, and thereby moderate their Griets for their Deceased Friends, which it seems were too often wont to be so excessive and inordinate, as did not at all become those that had such Hopes.

The Occasion of them this, The Saints at *Thessalonica* were sorely persecuted by the Unbelieving Jews, (as is hinted in several places of this Epistle) and many of them no doubt put to Death; which proving great Discouragements to those New Converts, St. Paul tells them, that God's Wrath would shortly seize upon those wicked Enemies of theirs, and then they should be delivered from those Pressures and Afflictions which at present they lay under: And as for those of their Fellow-Christians, who had already lost their Lives for the sake of

Zanch.
& Ham.

their Religion, (for some imagine such are here chiefly meant by ~~those that are dying~~) they need not be too much solicitous for, or perplex'd about; for if they did believe that Christ dyed and rose again, (which great Article of Faith they all profess'd) the same Assurance had they likewise of their Resurrection at the last. And because the several kinds of Death to which they were exposed, might a little startle their Belief, and increase their Sorrows; for they were sometimes committed to the Flames, and their Ashes scattered up and down in all places, (their Enemies fondly thinking thereby to quash their Hopes of a Resurrection,) Sometimes they were cast to the Lyons, and other Beasts of Prey, to be devoured by them, and sometimes their Carcasses thrown into the Sea, for the Fish to feed on; their surviving Friends, tho' they might be well enough satisfied of the State of their Souls, might yet possibly be too solicitous for their Bodies, what should become of them, whether they that were thus mangled were capable of a restauration: To Obviate which, the Apostle shews, that such shall be no losers by the Injuries that have been offered them, for they shall not only be raised as entire as those that dyed a Natural Death, but, as a special Reward of their Martyrdom, shall have the Priviledge to rise before the rest, this he intimates Ver. 16. *When the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, and the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God,*

the Dead in Christ, [or those that dyed for Christ] shall rise first: Nay, even those which are found alive at the Coming of our Lord, shall not have the start of those Martyr'd Saints, so as first to meet their Saviour, and receive their Crown; this he assures them ver. 15. *For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord*; as much as if he had said, I do not speak it according to my own Fancy or Private Opinion, but as I had it by Revelation, *That we which are alive, and remain unto the Coming of our Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep*; i. e. be caught up before them, to congratulate first our returning Lord, and be rewarded by him; and having thus evinc'd the Certainty of a Resurrection, he concludes thus, *Wherefore comfort ye one another with these Words*. But though we should grant, that the Word may be more eminently understood of those that dye for Christ, and suffer Martyrdom for his sake; yet they seem to require a larger Interpretation, and to be extended to all that are Christ's, 1 Cor. 15. 23. for those which are here said to be *asleep*, are oppos'd to those which are *alive*: And besides, if they were to be restrained to those only that thus suffered, then the Apostle's Argument for the Consolation of Christians, would only be serviceable to such, whose Friends were of that Happy and Illustrious Number. And therefore I shall take the Words in the more General Sense, and then we have in them these three Parts:

1. St. Paul's Desire to inform the Ignorance, and rectifie the Misapprehensions of the Saints of Thessa-

lonica, concerning the State of the Dead, of such as had laid down their Lives for the sake of Christ, and indeed of all that truly believe in him; *I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep*; it is a Matter of great Importance, and therefore would not have you lye under any Doubts or Mistakes herein, but desire you may have as full an Understanding of the thing, as the Gospel Revelation will afford you,

2. The Design which the Apostle had in clearing up these Notions to them, and that was to repress those Excessive Grievs and Inordinate Sorrows, which they had conceived upon the Account of their Departed Friends, for want of a right Apprehension and steady Belief hereof.

3. We have this Sorrow more particularly describ'd, *viz.* It was like theirs who had *no Hope*; Such who either absolutely denied the Immortality of the Soul, and the Certainty of a Future State, as the *Sadduces* among the *Jews*, and the *Epicureans* among the *Gentiles*: Or, such who had but faint Apprehensions and doubtful Guessees thereof, as the Generality of the Heathens, who had no other Direction herein but the Light of Nature. No Wonder to see such vent their Sorrows in an Extravagant Manner, when all their Hopes were terminated on this side the Grave, and when once gone, they fear'd there was to be no more Remembrance of them or their Friends for ever.

To bring the Words down to our Purpose, I resolve

Solve them into these three Propositions :

1. That there is a certain Measure of Sorrow allowable to a Christian, at the Death of his Friends.

2. That Excessive or Immoderate Sorrow, be the Loss never so heavy, is much unbecoming the Christian Temper, and very unsuitable to those Hopes which he professes to have ; *I would not have you sorrow like, others that have no Hopes.*

3. That a right Understanding, and a due Consideration of what our Religion offers in such Cases, is the most effectual Method for the suppressing of all those Inordinate Passions. This I gather from the former part of the Text, *I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them that are asleep ;* as if he had said, Had you but right Apprehensions of what the Gospel assures you herein, you would not be thus sorrowful.

To begin with the First,

1. That there is a certain Measure of Grief and Sorrow allowed to the Christian, at the Death of his Friend : This is clearly implied in the Words, for the Apostle by telling them, that they should not sorrow as those that had no Hope, does at the same time intimate, there must be some Allowance made, that Christianity did not design to extirpate our Passions, but only to moderate and correct them, to keep them from those Excesses which would disparage our Reason, and put the Soul into an Unquiet State.

'Tis true, there is no Command in the Gospel for this, because the Practice hereof has no Inherent Goodness in it, but argues rather the Debility and

Weakness of Humane Nature; however the Lawfulness and Expediency of such a Sorrow, cannot in the least be doubted, and this will appear;

1. From the Examples of many Pious and Devout Persons, who upon such Occasions have vented their Griets, without ever having them charged upon them as Crimes or Indecencies: We find *Jacob* renting his Cloaths, putting Sackcloth upon his Loyns, mourning bitterly for his Son many days, whom he supposed to have been slain, and refusing to be comforted, *Gen.* 37. 34. We read again of *Joseph* and his Brethren, making such a Lamentation for their Father *Jacob*, that the *Canaanites* changed the Name of the Place, to be a perpetual Remembrance of their Sorrow, *Gen.* 50. 11. *David*, whose Thoughts seem'd mightily to be raised above the little Concernments of this Life, doth not look upon it as any Derogation to his Piety, to be the chief Mourner at the Death of *Saul*, and his Beloved *Jonathan*; how Patherical his Grief was, may be seen in that Funeral Song he composed for that purpose, in 2 *Sam.* 1. 18. Chap. Nay, he doth indulge his Passion so far, as to lament the Tragical End of his Rebellious Son *Absalom*, in a most unusual strain, O my son *Absalom*, my son, my son *Absalom*, would to God I had dyed for thee; O *Absalom* my son, my son; and yet we find him not reproved for it by God or his Prophet, 2 *Sam.* 18. 33. Nay higher yet, our Blessed Saviour, who never did any thing amiss, bears a part with the *Jews* in their mourning for *Lazarus*; for when he

saw Mary, and the rest of the Company, lamenting the Loss of her Brother, *He likewise groan'd in spirit, and was troubled*; but when he approaches nearer to the Grave, his Sorrows found a Vent, our Dear Lord is then said to have wept, *John 11. 35.* and whether he did this out of Affection to his Friend, or upon the account of the *Jews* Incredulity, or some other Consideration, as some are apt to think, we are sure the Standers by took it in the first Sense; for in the Verse after, they say, *Behold how he loved him!* What shall I say more? God himself is said to be grieved and troubled at the Death of his Creatures, and is set forth by the Prophets, most passionately resenting the Loss of any of them, and when their Iniquities had forc'd him to destroy them, how pathetically doth he express the Conflicts he had within; *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? my Heart is turned within me, my Resentings are kindled together, Hosea 11. 8.*

2. As the Lawfulness of bewailing the Death of our Friends, is thus to be justified from Instances, so out of Compliance with our Natural Frailties, which must necessarily be allowed such Excursions; for being Creatures, compounded of gross, earthy Bodies, as well as pure immaterial Souls, we shall unavoidably be sensible of Calamities, Afflictions, Losses, and what greater than those of a Real Friend; so that Sorrow and Anguish will take hold of us, as long as we have Humane Passions and Affections to gratify; for our strength is not the strength

of stones, or our flesh of brass, as Job expostulates the Case. And as Humanity requires it, so Christianity does indulge it; tho' that indeed tends much to the raising up our Thoughts to higher Objects, yet it doth not oblige us to a stupid Regardlessness of our Concerns here below, or intend wholly to divest us of our Passions, such a Temper befitting rather a sullen Stoick, than a tender-hearted Christian; and therefore we are allowed not only to be sensible of, but to complain and weep for our Losses, tho' never to murmur or repine: Nay, Seneca himself, who was much of the Stoical Humour, could say, *Nobis ignosci potest prolapfus ad lacrymas, si non nimis decurrerint;*

Epi. 63.
Inter ex-
empla co-
rum sui
quos do-
lor vicat.

That Tears might be excused, if they did not flow down in too great abundance: And he tells us in the same Epistle, what his own Carriage was at the Death of his Dear Friend *Annius Serenus*: I, saith he, *was of the Number of those whom Grief overcame*: Nature, it seems, was there too strong for his Philosophy, tho' at other times none outbraves the Misfortunes of Life, or the Terrors of Death at a higher Rate, as if they had not the least Power to move his Wise Man.

3. Such Sorrows are the proper intimations of our Love to the deceased Person, they are the last Expressions of Kindness to our Friend, and therefore very allowable; there being no wayes so proper of shewing our Value and Esteem for them. Hence it was a Custom among the Jews, and some part of the Gentile World, to set apart such a Portion of Time for these Mournful Exercises, in which

'twas accounted dishonourable and inhumane, to set about other Concerns, and therefore sayes the wise Son of Sirach, *Weep bitterly for the dead, and make great moan, and use lamentation, as he is worthy, lest thou be evil spoken of, Eccles. 38. 17.* Solomon tells us, there is a Time to Mourn, and a Time to Weep, as well as for other Actions, and that every thing is beautiful in its season, therefore none so fit for this as the Loss of our Friends. When God forbade Ezekiel to Mourn for his dead Wife, and to omit those Expressions of Sorrow which were then in use, the People were presently amaz'd at this thing, and therefore came to him and said, *Wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us that thou dost so? Ezek. 24. 29.* They concluded God had some further meaning by this unusual Behaviour of his Prophet, as it fell out afterwards, or else at such a time especially he would never have forbore to *Cover his Lips, or Eat the Bread of Men.*

4. Sometimes God intends the Death of Friends, as Tokens of his Displeasure, and therefore our Grievs are not only allowable, but highly requisite too; for in all the Punishment which he inflicts, his Design is to make us sensible of the stroke, and to humble us under the weight of the Affliction; if it doth not this, God misses of the End of his Correction, and by such a Security and Unconcernedness we do heighten his Displeasure. When therefore he takes away such as are our greatest Stay and Support, the Delight of our Eyes, the Joy of our
Hearts.

Hearts, the Staff of our Age, or such who were Publick Blessings to the Neighbourhood where they were, skilful to advise, and ready to assist; then sure the Almighty calls for Mourning and Lamentation, and expects we should take Notice of his Hand; therefore the Prophet upbraids the Jews with their gross Stupidity, that the Righteous should perish, and no Man lay it to Heart; none moved at it, none troubled for it, when it was design'd as a publick Calamity, *Isa. 57. 1.*

Upon these Accounts it must be Confess'd that there is a certain Measure of Sorrow allowed the Christian, at the Death of his Friends; Humanity requires it, and Religion does indulge in

2. The next thing arising from the Words, is, that Excessive or Immoderate Sorrow, be the Loss in this kind never so heavy, is much unbecoming the Christian, and very unsuitable to that Belief which he professes; This is expressed, *I would not have you sorrow like those that have no hope*; i. e. like such who either deny the Immortality of the Soul, and scoff at the Resurrection of the Body, who thought the Grave made an everlasting separation between them and their Friends, and when the fatal stroke was once given, the Spirit vanished as the soft ayre, and there was not possibility of a return, or else doubted of a Future State: No wonder to see such indulge their Passions to the utmost; but the Christian who has such great Assurances of a Future Being, betrays his Weakness, and disparages his Religion,

gion, if he suffer his Griefs to exceed the Bounds of Prudence and Moderation. — Now by this immoderate Sorrow I mean, that which is unreasonable, as to the Duration and Continuance, or to the measures and degrees thereof.

1. That which offends as to the Duration, is, when too great a share of our Time is laid out this way; when like some fond Persons, we consume Years in those unprofitable Complaints, and refuse to be comforted, because our Friends are not. Some Time indeed must be allotted those tender Passions, Custom and Decency will exact some, and the Worth or Nearness of the Decased will require more; but to spend our days in Trouble, and our years in Vanity, because that hath happened to thy Friend, which must ere long befall thy self, to whom 'twas as natural to dye as to be born, is not only foolish in it self, but injurious to thy own Quiet, and displeasing to Heaven. Much more advis'd was the Method that *David* took, who when his sick Child dyed, arose from the Earth, washed and anointed himself, and changed his Apparel, upon this Consideration, *Wherefore should I now afflict my self, can I bring him back again, I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,* 2 Sam. 12. 23.

2. As our Sorrows may be faulty as to their Continuance, so may they be as to the Measures and Degrees thereof, they may soon exceed the Bounds of a Christian Behaviour, and this is when they vent themselves in loud Outcries and Exclamations, in

passionate Expressions, and oblique Reflections upon God's Administration of things, in publishing our Calamities to all that are near us, and tiring them with our Complaints : Or, when it is so outrageous, as to drive us to foolish and indecent Carriages, as was the manner of the Heathens ; who us'd to make lamentable Howlings for their Dead, to besmear their Faces, to cut their own Flesh, and sometimes to slay their Beasts, or their Slaves, to accompany the Ghosts of their Deceased Friends. Or again, when we are so intent upon our Loss, as wholly to neglect our own Affairs, when in a fullen, discontented Mood, we regard neither our selves, nor any Concern of Life, and refuse to partake of any of those Mercies Providence has bless'd us with, because we are cross'd in this ; as if we could not testify our Affections, unless we did sacrifice our Health and Enjoyment, our Peace and Comfort, to the Memory of those who neither regarded what we did, nor received any advantage by these supererogatory Works of ours : And therefore, St. Jerom deservedly reprov'd the Religious Paula, because at the Death of any of her Children, the greatness of her Sorrow brought her even to the Brink of the Grave ; *Take no heaviness to Heart, says the wise Jew, drive it away, and remember the last end ; forget it not, for there is no turning again ; thou shalt not do him good, but hurt thy self, Eccle. 38. 20, 21.* As if he had said, let the Contemplation of thy own Mortality make thee to spare thy self, you are shortly to submit to the same Fate, and therefore re-

serve some Pity for your self, and be not so Extravagant in the bemoaning of those, who are either Blessed, and so need it not, or past a Recovery, and so deserve it not.

Some Losses, 'tis confess'd, may make a deeper Impression than other, according to the Worth of the Person, the nearness of the Relation, or the need we had of his Assistance, in such Cases quicker and deeper Resentments may be allowed; but be it as afflictive as we can imagine, it will not justify the Christian to exceed the Bounds of Decency, he must *not sorrow as those that have no hope*: For,

1. Such Sorrows are useless and unprofitable, and therefore not fit Business for a Christian to be employed in long, who has Work of far greater Importance before him, such designs to bring about, that he can spare but little leisure for Trifles, or afford to consume his Time and Strength in that which is impertinent, unattainable.

If my Friend was Good and Virtuous, he is already possess'd of a far greater measure of Happiness, than what this World could bestow, and there remains in a joyful Expectation of a fuller Bliss at the Restitution of his Body: And therefore, why such Outcries and Direful Complaints, for the Departure of that Soul which is now Triumphant, glad it hath got loose from a vain, troublesome, wicked World, and you grieve it was a Prisoner here no longer. If such Blessed Spirits did behold those Scenes of Sorrow, which are usually acted here below, they

C

would

would pity our mistaken Zeal; and be ready to bespeak their Mourners, as our Saviour did the Women which followed him to his Crucifixion, *Weep not for me, but for your selves*, and your Relations that survive; we are happy, and have pass'd those Calamities which you that remain in the Body must still conflict with. If again, the Person we vent our Sighs and Complaints for, was vain and useless, liv'd Vicious and Ungodly, and dyed without giving any tolerable Hopes of a sincere Repentance; he is gone to his place, neither our Tears nor our Pennances are of any Efficacy, for the remitting of his Punishment, or for bringing him back to live over another Life, to correct the Errours of the former; it costs more to redeem their Souls, so that we must be forc'd to let that alone for ever: And indeed those that are such, are unworthy of our Sorrows, how Intimate or Dear soever they have been before; they cannot much deserve our Pity, who did not deserve it at the Hands of our Merciful Father. Thus David is said to be comforted, within a while after the Death of his Son *Amnon*, though the circumstances thereof were lamentable enough, possibly upon the Consideration of his being so Lewd and Dissolute a Person, and therefore not deserving to be the Subject of any long continued Sorrow; and we find, 'tis put down among the Punishments of such, that *The memory of the wicked shall rot*; so that in both respects, such inordinate Griefs are useless and insignificant.

2. They are likewise selfish, and therefore un-

becoming a Christian, who is to be acted by higher Principles : Self-love is usually at the bottom of those excessive Sorrows, whatever pretences of Kindness we make to them ; for those violent Passions are seldom exercised, but when our own Interest is concern'd, and therefore such complain not so much that their Friend is gone, as that they are left, that they are deprived of his Society, and of those Comforts they received thereby ; Or, that they must now despair of those Helps and Assistances they expected from him ; and so 'tis not properly their Friend's Absence, but their own Evils and Inconveniencies which they deplore ; for with such the Remembrance soonest goes off, when they are supplied with Comforts and Assistances elsewhere. If, I say, the Cause of such extream Passions were search'd into, they would usually be found to resolve into this at the last ; whereas true Christian Sorrow has less of Noise and Pomp in it, is more even and temperate, and arises from other Considerations.

3. Such immoderate Grievs very often proceed from a murmuring and discontented Spirit, which must never be allowed the Christian, be the Affliction never so severe ; they argue a Repining at the Dispensations of Providence : Hence it is, that those who give their Passions so much Liberty, seldom forbear venting themselves in unhandsome Reflections upon the Divine Providence : Or however, secretly tax it of Injustice or Partiality, in the managing of Affairs here below.

4. They do manifestly betray a great defect in our Faith, that we are not so fully convinc'd of the certainty of a future Being as we ought, that we give but too slight a Credit to what the Scripture has in such a case propos'd as the chief Support, and therefore we *sorrow as those that have no hope*; for were we firmly perswaded of an Immortality afterwards, and the immediate Happiness of those that sleep in Jesus, with how calm and compos'd a Mind should we bear the Loss: It is for those to fill the Air with Shrieks and Lamentations, that used to give their *Aeternum Vale* to the Ashes of their Friends: But the Pious Christian, by the help of his Faith, can easily view Eternity on the other side the Grave; for indeed, he alone partakes of those glorious Hopes, those great Assurances, which can render him truly Triumphant at such a time: This brings me to the last Proposition, *viz.*

Thirdly, That a right Understanding, and due Consideration of what the Gospel offers in such cases, is the most effectual Method for suppressing all those inordinate Passions: This St. Paul intimates, by these Words, *I would not have you ignorant, Brethren, concerning those that are asleep*; as if he had said, Had you but clear Apprehensions of what the Christian Religion delivers, concerning the State of your deceased Friends, your Grievs would never be so excessive, you would never behave your selves in so indecent, so despairing a manner, as those poor *Gentiles* do with whom you converse, who have not as yet

embraced the Doctrine of our Saviour; for as they are *without God*, so they are *without Hope* in the World. And now what that great *Catholic* or universal Remedy is, which the Gospel propoſes as the chief Support, the Apoſtle delivers in the Verſes after; For if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus ſhall God bring with him: For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven with a ſhout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. This is a brief Deſcription of the Chriſtian's Hope, the great Foundation upon which all his Comforts are built, and indeed nothing below this can vanquiſh the fears of Death, or ſcatter all thoſe black and melancholly Thoughts that are apt to ſeize us, either at our own or our Friend's approaching Fate. And now the certainty of this, is to be fetch'd only from the Goſpel; never had the World ſo full a Demonſtration of theſe important Truths, till our Saviour came, and brought Life and Immortality to light. All beſides, might be truly ſaid to be *without hope*; for though they might make ſome imperfect Gueſſes at a future State, by the Light of Reason, yet their Notions were ſo obſcure, and their Opinions about it ſo various, that they could neither ſatiſſie themſelves nor others about a Matter of ſo great Concernment: But whatever they might think of the Soul, yet the Reſurrection of the Body

was a thing quite beyond their Reach and Comprehension, and indeed contrary to the Principles of their Philosophy; the compleat Knowledge of this, was purely the Effect of the Gospel Manifestation, so that the utmost their Fancies could extend to, was but a partial imperfect Happiness, in respect of what the Christian is assur'd of. But alas! the Generality went not so far, the common Cry with them was much like the Arguings of those Fools in the Book of Wisdom, Chap. 2. *Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of man there is no remedy, neither was there any man known to have returned from the Grave, for we are born at all adventure, and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been, for the breath in our nostrils is as smোক, and a little spark in the moving of our heart, which being extinguish'd, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our Spirit shall vanish as the soft Air: Our time is a very shadow that passeth away, and after our End there is no returning, for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again.* Thus it was with them, and truly it was little otherwise with their Grave and Learned Philosophers, though they made such great Flourishes, and some of them talk'd loftily about the Joys of the separate Soul, yet they were so extravagant in their Fancies, and some of them so inconsistent with themselves, when they had Occasion to discourse on this Subject, that we may easily imagine they were at a Loss, and not much satisfied themselves, in that which they taught the common People to believe: Insomuch, that Socrates, who was as great an Instance of Virtue and

Learn-

Learning, as the *Gentile* World could produce, yet towards the latter End of his Life, plainly confesses his Ignorance in this thing; for when he came to plead his cause before his Judges, and largely discourse of the Happy State of good Men hereafter, at last frankly owns, that he could be content ^{to die} to dye over and over, was he but assured of the reality of what he had so often asserted; and afterwards receiving his Sentence, concludes his Apology in this doubtful manner, *I am now leaving the World, tis your Lot to live, and mine to dye, but whether of us two shall fare the better; i. e. (whether there be any Existence on the other side the Grave)* ^{is unknown} *is unknown to all but God alone*; so little Confidence had that great Man even at such a time, when he should have been constant to his former Reasonings, and magnified his own Philosophy. Hence we may safely affirm of a great part of them, what the Author of the Book of Wisdom says, that *As for the Mysteries of God, they know them not, neither hoped they for the wages of Righteousness, nor discern'd a Reward for blameless Souls.* And now being thus wavering in their Minds, and unfix'd as to their Resolutions about an Immortality, what was there left to fortifie them against the fears of Dying? Nature is apt to startle at the thoughts of a Dissolution, even then when it is assured it serves but as a Passage to that Life which shall never end; but when it looks upon it as the utmost Period of their Being, as that which crumbles them into Dust, without any possibility of a return,

Apol. Socrat. apud Plat.

what Reflections can be more dismal or amazing !
 And therefore, to prepare themselves the better for
 the fatal Break, they invented many pretty Apo-
 thegms and Paradoxes, furnished themselves with
 some Common Topicks or Witty Sayings, that so
 they might have some Relief against their own or
 their Friends Departure : But alas ! they are all of
 them but poor Receipts, in respect of that Sovereign
 Antidote which the Gospel prescribes. To
 instance in some of their choicest ;

Sometimes they would say, that " Death was
 " the unavoidable Fate of all Mankind, that there
 " was no resisting the Power of it, they saw that
 " wise Men dyed as well as Fools, and therefore it
 " was their Prudence not to be concern'd at that
 " which no ways could be avoided.

Again, " It was a common Calamity, we every
 " day meet with Remembrances of Mortality, and
 " should such thoughts discompose us, our Life
 " would be a continual Vexation.

Sometimes they would use this little Sophistry,
 " That Death cannot hurt us, because when that is
 " we are not, and when we are that is absent, so is
 " a thing that does not at all belong to us, and if
 " perhaps there be any pain at the last Separation of
 " the Soul from the Body, yet afterwards we shall
 " not grieve at what we had endur'd a little before.

Gal. synt.
Eph. cap.
 21.

This was the great Retreat *Epicurus* and his Follow-
 ers betook themselves to.

Sometimes they would argue after this Rate,
 " That

[21]
“ That we are dead already as to so much of our Life
“ which is past and gone, for so much as we live, so
“ much we dye, being dead to the day past, and
“ that which we usually call Death is but our last
“ Death, and therefore as we did not fear our former
“ Death, why should we that which is to come.

Another little Hold they had was, “ That they
“ were admitted into Life upon this Condition, that
“ they should give place to others as the former Ge-
“ neration did to them, and therefore a piece of In-
“ justice to be unwilling to go off the Stage when
“ their Work was done.

Others would Comfort themselves after this man-
ner, “ That Death was a desirable thing, seeing there
“ were so many Troubles and Distresses that did at-
“ tend us, for it was no more than *Solutio omnium Do-*
“ *lorum*, The easying and disburthening us of all our
“ Cares and Fears, the letting us loose from an In-
“ firm Body and a Tormenting World, and laying
“ us up in that quiet, secure state, wherein we were
“ before we had a Being. This is Seneca's last Re-
fuge: For tho' he sometimes seems to intimate a Be-
lief of a Future State, yet he is quickly off again,
very inconstant as to his Resolutions in that Point,
and makes use of this as the chief Prescription to allay
our Fears and Moderate our Grievs. Some in the
last place soar'd higher, and would solace themselves
with the Thoughts, of the Soul's enjoying by Death
a true Freedom and Liberty, of its being received

*Conso. ad
Marcia-
am, Sect.
19.*

into pleasant delightful Mansions, and there partaking for a vast Tract of Time of such Enjoyments as were more suitable to its Nature : This was the Opinion of the *Platonists*, but their Fancies in this kind were so Extravagant, their Notions generally so Obscure, and their Discourses so Romantick, that it may very well be question'd, whether they had those great Transports when they were about to exchange this Prison of the Body, for those Airy Vehicles they so much talk'd of.

Nay, such as profess'd most to own the Incorruptible Nature of the Soul, and stedfastly to believe a Future State, yet supposed such various Transmigrations and Shiftings of the Soul from one Body to another, as must needs be an abatement of its Happiness ; because by such alterations, it should soon lose all Knowledge both of its Friends and it self too.

These were the cheif Prescriptions the Moralists made use of, but alas how slight and feeble are they in respect of that Lively Hope the Christian is possess'd of ; with what Courage and Constancy such Notions might inspire them I know not, but certainly where Persons find themselves made for higher Objects than what this World presents, and have a Consciousness of their own Eternity, nothing can effectually compose the tumultuary Rovings of that Mind, but the Assurances of an Immortality, and of such an Immortality only which the Christi-

an hopes for: Without this all the Notions of the Philosophers and Sentences of the Moralists signifie little, Death can never be vanquish'd by such weak Charms, but would be still too hard for their Principles, too strong for their Resolutions; they must Sorrow even as those that have no Hope: So that the best of them pass'd off the Stage rather in an obstinate, vain-glorious Humour, than in any true Satisfaction or Triumph. But now the Christian has a far better Provision made him; for besides the Helps and Considerations he has in common with the Philosophers, which he may serve himself of when he pleases; his Religion offers him such Supports as are sufficient to repress all inordinate Passions, and compose our Minds into a steady Frame.

It assures us of the reality of a Divine Providence in the Managery of things here below, that whatever Affliction, Loss or Calamity befalls us, was so Ordered by an over-ruling Providence: This was a Truth which the Gentile World either absolutely denied, or however was not so well satisfied in as to make any true Use of their Adversities, or to be Patient under them. — But now we know, that *Affliction springs not out of the dust, nor trouble out of the ground*, that nothing falls upon us without the Knowledge and Permission of our Heavenly Father, who still designs our Welfare by all the severe Methods and Dispensations he exercises towards us, and therefore the Thoughts of this must needs

render us more Calm and Sedate at such times, than those who can spy out nothing of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, but look upon all their Crosses as the Effects either of an ill Chance, or an inevitable Fate.

But more especially doth it relieve our Thoughts, by giving us so great an Assurance of a happy State hereafter, that not only the Soul, but the Body too, shall live for ever, that the whole Man shall be perfectly and entirely raised, and Death at last be *swallowed up in Victory*; therefore those that were Dead, are said in my Text only to be *asleep*; and if we sleep we shall do well, as the Disciples said of *Lazarus*: It is only a resting for a while in our Dormitories, but we shall as certainly awake in the Morning as ever we lay down — And this we are ascertain'd of:

First, By many full and clear Testimonies in the Scripture, of whole Divine Authority we have so many undoubted Proofs: Here we are plainly told, that

John 5. 28. *the Hour is coming, in which all that are in the Graves shall hear, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the Resurrection of life*: Here it is said, that *when our earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*: Here is promised, that *this Corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must put on Immortality*: Nay, here in the Context we have a more particular Description of the Manner thereof, and in what Order it shall be.

Secondly,

Secondly, But more especially are we secur'd hereof by the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour; therefore St. Paul makes use of this Argument, to excite in us these Hopes, as in the Verse after my Text; *For if we believe that Jesus dyed, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*: As if he had said, If once your Faith will carry you so far, as to believe your Lord's Resurrection, you need never doubt your own, this being a Matter of Fact, surpasses all the Arguments that could be drawn from any other Topick whatsoever: For our Saviour dying in a Humane Capacity, and being raised again, does clearly evince, that we who are of the same Nature, are capable of a like Restauration. This indeed is a sensible Experiment of the possibility of a Resurrection; but now that which was thus shewn to be possible, is made also certain to us, from the Relation that is between Christ and us, as he is the Head, and we are his Members, and so shall be made Partakers of the like Condition with him. So our Apostle elsewhere, 2 Cor. 4. 14. *Knowing this, that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus*; of which we have an Earnest by the Spirit he hath given us. So our Apostle again, Rom. 8. 11. *If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by the Spirit that dwelleth in you*: So that by this Triumphant Action chiefly it is, that our Lord has

Mat. 27.
52.

has brought *Life and Immortality to light*; brought those Mysteries to a full View, which before lay hid under Types and Figures, or were only faintly apprehended by Natural Reason. And to give us a further Assurance of the thing, He manifested his Power before; for at his Death the *Graves were opened, and many bodies of Saints which slept arose, and came out of their Graves after his Resurrection, and appear'd to many*; intimating by that Release of some few Prisoners made then, what a general Goal-delivery there should be when he comes at last in his Glory.

And now upon a Review of all this, shall the Christian sorrow like those that have no Hope? Shall he not be able to part with a Pious Friend or Relation, but must he lament him as if lost for ever? How easily rather, may he at such a time triumph over Death, and cry out, *Where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* Where are all your Trophies? the Body indeed you have seized on, but that is only a Sacred *Depositum*, committed to your Trust for a time, you must make a faithful Restitution of it e're long; the Victory truly is ours, and God hath given it us through our Lord Jesus Christ: By the help of this single Consideration, how often hath Death been triumph'd over by the Primitive Christians, who have been so transported with the thoughts hereof, that they have been eager to quit this dull Mortality before they were call'd, and to press upon those

those Eternal Mansions, before they had compleated their Probation-ship here below; and yet we have the same Arguments for the truth hereof as they, and may have as strong Evidences for our Title.

However, if our Faith cannot inspirit our Resolutions so high, yet sure it will be sufficient to moderate our Grief, to restrain the Inordinacy of our Passions for our deceased Friends, especially when they are such as sleep in Jesus, such who are not so much departed from us as gone before us, have the Privilege to go a little the sooner to take Possession of that Glorious Inheritance, where they joyfully expect the Consummating of their Bliss, as well in the Redemption of their Bodies, as in the being restored to those Pious Friends they parted with here.

That this is the Condition of every true Christian that is fallen asleep, our Religion will not suffer us to be ignorant of: And that it is now the happy state of this Reverend Person, whose Obsequies we at this time come to Celebrate, our Charity easily teaches us to believe, and therefore we are not to Sorrow as those that have no Hope.

Tho' indeed, if at any time our Passions might be allowed to exceed the common Bounds, now it is that Humane Frailty might expect to be Indulg'd, when one (who perhaps according to the Compass of the Orb in which he moved, was as useful to the Community as any besides) has bid

adieu

adieu to the World, when it stood in great need of such Exemplary Piety and Conduct.

But when again we Consider, He was one of those of whom we have the greatest Hopes, Christian Prudence is so to regulate our Deportment, as that our Sorrow do neither betray the Weakness of our Faith, nor imply too great a Fondness for our selves.

He was trained up in Religion under the early Instructions of Careful Parents, and of a Father equally Learned as Pious, the late Lord Bishop of *Notwich*: Had the farther Help of an Academical Life in one of the chiefest Colledges of the University, from whence he was removed to this Place, where he was near forty Years a Faithful Pastor, that taught out of the Pulpit as well as in it, and whose Conversation was a Comment upon his Doctrine.

The constant Tenour of his Actions evidently shew'd, that Piety and a due Fear of Almighty God was fix'd at the bottom; that he had right Notions of Religion, and an awful Sense of his Duty: In the Management of which, he avoided all those little Arts and Designs, which many often practice to obtain the Vogue and Applause of others; for I could never perceive in him any intemperate Zeal, or studious affectation of Pretiness and Singularity, no Pretensions to a higher Strain of Piety than others; but Goodness in its own

own Native Dress, every thing acted without Pomp or Noise, (choosing rather to be a Christian in earnest, than striving only to seem so) as being no doubt sufficiently satisfied with the Approbation of that *Judge which sees in secret*, and the Testimony of that one Evidence which is above a thousand Witnesses. He had all along that great Probity and Uprightness, and withall such a sweetness of Temper, as procur'd the Esteem and Love of most that knew him, and his Conversation he so prudently temper'd, as render'd it agreeable to all that deserv'd it; for he knew how to be Cheerful without being vain and light, and how to be Serious, and not sullen or morose.

His great Meekness and Condescension added no small Lustre to his other Accomplishments, for here appear'd not the least Leaven of Pride to sour his Conversation, no haughty, disdainful Looks towards Inferiours, no fond affectation of Distance, or Difficulty of Access, but all along comporting himself with that unstrain'd Humility, as evidently declar'd him to be a true Minister of his, who own'd himself to be a Servant to all.

How faithfully he discharged the several Relations he stood in, either as a Husband, a Parent, or a Friend, is so evident to all that had an Intimacy with him, that I need only say, scarce greater Instances of Love, Tenderness and Sincerity are now to be found. 'Tis confess'd, that neither his

Temper nor his Judgment, carried him up to the Heights and Violences of some Men, but yet he well understood the Design of Religion, and the Interest of our Church, and proved I dare say more serviceable to both, than many that pretended stronger Zeal, or made a louder Noise : He very well knew, a due Regard should be had to the Passions, Prepossessions and Infirmities of Humane Nature, the Consideration whereof would still incline every good Man to use such gentle Methods, as are most proper to accomodate lighter Differences, and advance the main Ends of the Gospel. All Persons are naturally conceited of their own Notions, (especially such as respect Religion) and nothing so soon overcomes those Prejudices, and unbinds the Charm, as a Candid Representation of their Mistakes; whereas a furious Opposition ~~in~~, creates either a greater Fondness for, or Obstinacy in them; or else only makes such Converts, as at the first Opportunity will turn our Enemies, and study Revenges for their past Restraints. However, if it was for nothing else but the Fallibility of Humane Judgment, and the Mutability of Humane Affairs, a due Exercise of Moderation would not be absurd or inconvenient, but when it seems to bear so near a Resemblance to that *Wisdom that descends from above*, which is not only *pure*, but *peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated*, we have no reason to be asham'd to own the thing, or afraid to defend those that lov'd it.

But

But whatever might be the Opinions of Others, I make no Question but You that were under his Ministerial Charge, to whom he was so long and so well known, cannot but have a great Value and Esteem for his Memory, and therefore his Example and his Doctrine ought to be still of force with You; for though he be *dead*, yet to you he *still speaks*: The Unblameableness of his Life, and the soundness of his Discourses, will but aggravate your Guilt, if you disobey the one, and forget the other. Endeavour then so to be *followers of him as he was of Christ*, that when you are to pass into the other World, you need not be afraid of meeting with him, nor be ashamed to own You; but there Congratulating each other's safe Arrival, You may increase the Triumph of your Faithful Conductor, and procure for him that *Aureola*, or additional Glory, that belongs to those who *turn many to Righteousness* — For indeed *what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown of Rejoycing? are not even ye in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

His Death-Bed I may say was Easie to him, though his Pains were very acute and tormenting; for his Mind was quiet and sedate, and that enabled him to bear his Afflictions with a wonderful Patience and Resignation: There was nothing (as he profess'd to me) that discomposed his Spirit, or made him fearful of Dying. And indeed, this was but the Consequence of his past Actions; for he
that.

that had so long kept Innocence, and look'd to the thing
 that is right, according to the Psalmist's Observation,
will find peace at the last. He had of late so often en-
 countred with the Harbingers of Death, that he could
 not be much surprized at the approach of it, and his
 Conscience was too clear to be fear'd at any thing
 beyond it.

Seeing then we are not ignorant of this Person
 who is now asleep, we ought not, even such as
 were most nearly related to him, or had an Inter-
 est in his Friendship, sorrow like those that have
 no Hope, but Commit him to the Earth, in sure
 and certain Hope of his Resurrection to Eternal
 Life, and endeavour to imitate that Justice, Humi-
 lity, Charity and Patience, and other Christian Vir-
 tues that were remarkable in him; that when we
 come to put off Mortality, we may meet with that
 Reward of Well-doing, which we have so good
 Grounds to believe our Deceased Brother hath to
 his unspeakable Joy already received.



FINIS

